NUMB. LXV.

The SPECTATOR.

——— Demetri teque Tigelli
Diſcipularum inter Jubeo plorare cathedras. Hor.

Tueſday, May 15. 1711.

AFTER having at large explained what Wit is, and deſcribed the falſe Appearances of it, all that Labour ſeems but an uſeleſs Enquiry, without ſome Time be ſpent in conſidering the Application of it. The Seat of Wit, when one ſpeaks as a Man of the Town and the World, is the Play-houſe; I ſhall therefore fill this Paper with Reflections upon the Uſe of it in that Place. The Application of Wit in the Theatre has a ſtrong an Effect upon the Manners of our Gentlemen, as the Taſte of it has upon the Writings of our Authors. It may, perhaps, look like a very preſumptuous Work, tho' not Foreign from the Duty of a SPECTATOR, to tax the Writings of thoſe as have long had the general Applauſe of a Nation: But I ſhall always make Reaſon, Truth, and Nature the Meaſures of Praiſe and Diſpraiſe; if theſe are for me, the Generality of Opinion is of no Conſequence againſt me; if they are againſt me, the General Opinion cannot long ſupport me.

Without further Preface, I am going to look into ſome of our moſt Applauded Plays, and ſee whether they deſerve the Figure they at preſent bear in the Imaginations of Men, or not.

In reflecting upon theſe Works, I ſhall chiefly dwell upon that for which each reſpective Play is moſt celebrated. The preſent Paper ſhall be employed upon *Sir Fopling Flatter*. The Received Character of this Play is, That it is the Pattern of Gentile Comedy. *Dorimant* and *Harriot* are the Characters of Greateſt Conſequence, and if theſe are Low and Mean, the Reputation of the Play is very Unjuſt.

I will take for granted, that a fine Gentleman ſhould be honeſt in his Actions, and refined in his Language. Inſtead of this, our Hero, in this Piece, is a direct Knave in his Deſigns, and a Clown in his Language. *Bellair* is his Admirer and Friend, in return for which, becauſe he is forſooth a greater Wit than his ſaid Friend, he thinks it reaſonable to perſwade him to Marry a young Lady, whoſe Virtue, he thinks, will laſt no longer than 'till ſhe is a Wife, and then ſhe cannot but fall to his Share, as he is an irreſiſtible fine Gentleman. The Falſhood to Mrs. *Loveit*, and the Barbarity of Triumphing over her Anguiſh for loſing him, is another Inſtance of his Honeſty, as well as his good Nature. As to his fine Language; he calls the Orange Woman, who, it ſeems, is inclined to grow Fat, *An Over-grown Jade, with a Flasket of Guts before her*; and ſalutes her with a pretty Phraſe of, *How now, Double Tripe?* Upon the Mention of a Country Gentlewoman, whom he knows nothing of, (no one can imagine why) he *will lay his Life ſhe is ſome awkard, ill-faſhioned Country Toad, who not having above four Dozen of Hairs on her Head, has adorned her Baldneſs with a large white Fruz, that ſhe may look Sparkiſhly in the Fore-front of the King's Box at an old Play.* Unnatural Mixture of ſenſeleſs Common Place!

As to the Generoſity of his Temper, he tells his poor Footman, *If he did not wait better* —— he would turn him away, in the inſolent Phraſe of, *I'll Uncaſe you.*

Now for Mrs. *Harriot*: She laughs at Obedience to an abſent Mother, whoſe Tenderneſs *Buſie* deſcribes to be ſo exquiſite, *that ſhe is ſo pleaſed with finding* Harriot *again, that ſhe cannot chide her for being out of the Way.* This Witty Daughter, and Fine Lady, has ſo little Reſpect for this good Woman, that ſhe Ridicules her Air in taking Leave, and cries, *In what Struggle is my poor Mother yonder? See, See, her Head tottering, her Eyes ſtaring, and her under Lip trembling.* But all this is atoned for, becauſe *ſhe has more Wit than is uſual in her Sex, and as much Malice, tho' ſhe is as Wild as you would wiſh her, and has a Demureneſs in her Looks that makes it ſo ſurpriſing!* Then to recommend her as a fit Spouſe for his Hero, the Poet makes her ſpeak her Senſe of Marriage very ingeniouſly. *I Think*, ſays ſhe, *I might be brought to endure him, and that is all a reaſonable Woman ſhould expect in an Husband.* It is, methinks, unnatural that we are not made to underſtand how ſhe that was bred under a ſilly pious old Mother, that would never truſt her out of her Sight, came to be ſo Polite.

It

It cannot be denied, but that the Negligence of every thing, which engages the Attention of the ſober and valuable Part of Mankind, appears very well drawn in this Piece: But it is denied, that it is neceſſary to the Character of a Fine Gentleman, that he ſhould in that manner Trample upon all Order and Decency. As for the Character of *Dorimant*, is it more of a Coxcomb than that of *Foplin*. He ſays of one of his Companions, that a good Correſpondence between them is their mutual Intereſt. Speaking of that Friend, he declares, their being much together *makes the Women think the better of his Underſtanding, and judge more favourably of my Reputation. It makes him paſs upon ſome for a Man of very good Senſe, and me upon others for a very civil Perſon.*

This whole celebrated Piece is a perfect Contradiction to good Manners, good Senſe, and common Honeſty; and as there is nothing in it but what is built upon the Ruin of Virtue and Innocence, according to the Notion of Merit in this Comedy, I take the Shoomaker to be, in reality, the fine Gentleman of the Play: For it ſeems he is an Atheiſt, if we may depend upon his Character as given by the Orange-Woman, who is her ſelf far from being the loweſt in the Play. She ſays of a Fine Man, who is *Dorimant*'s Companion, There *is not ſuch another Heathen in the Town, except the Shoemaker.* His Pretention to be the Hero of the *Drama* appears ſtill more in his own Deſcription of his way of Living with his Lady. *There is*, ſays he, *never a Man in Town lives more like a Gentleman with his Wife than I do; I never mind her Motions; ſhe never enquires into mine. We ſpeak to one another civilly, hate one another heartily; and becauſe it is Vulgar to Lye and Soak together, we have each of us our ſeveral Settle-Bed.* That of *Soaking together* is as good as if *Dorimant* had ſpoken it himſelf; and, I think, ſince he puts Humane Nature in as ugly a Form as the Circumſtance will bear, and is a ſtaunch Unbeliever, he is very much Wronged in having no part of the good Fortune beſtowed in the laſt Act.

To ſpeak plainly of this whole Work, I think nothing but being loſt to a Senſe of Innocence and Virtue can make any one ſee this Comedy, without obſerving more frequent Occaſion to move Sorrow and Indignation, than Mirth and Laughter. At the ſame time I allow it to be Nature, but it is Nature in its utmoſt Corruption and Degeneracy.

Compleat Setts of this Paper, for the Month of April, are to be ſold by Mr. Graves in St. James's Street; Mr. Lewis under Tom's Coffee-Houſe, Covent-Garden; Mr. Lillie, Perfumer, the Corner of Beaufort-Buildings; Mr. Sanger at the Temple Gate, Mr. Knapton in St. Paul's Church-Yard, Mr. Round in Exchange Ally, and Mrs. Baldwin in Warwick-lane, where alſo may be had thoſe for the Month of March.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

At the Deſire of ſeveral Ladies of Quality.

For the Benefit of Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Cox.

By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane, this preſent Tueſday, the 15th of May, will be preſented a Comedy, called, The Fortune-Hunters; or, Two Fools well met. The part of Young Wealthy to be perform'd by Mr. Wilks, Maria by Mrs. Oldfield, Sir William Wealthy by Mr. Bullock, Tom Wealthy by Mills, Mr. Spruce by Mr. Norris, Mr. Shamtown by Mr. Pack, Littlegad by Mr. Bowman, Lady Sly by Mrs. Powell, Sophia by Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Spruce by Mrs. Bicknell. And on Thurſday next will be preſented a Comedy called, The Scorn'd Lady: Written by Beaumont and Fletcher. For the Benefit of Mr. Bickerſtaff.

This Play is ſold by Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over-againſt Catherine-ſtreet in the Strand.

A curious Collection of Italian Paintings (by Giacomo and Leandro Baſſan, Schiavone, Tintoret, Spagnoler, Nicola and Gaſpar Pouſſin, Claude Lorain, Salvator Roſa, Fran. Bologneſe, Mola, the Borgognon, Luca Jordano, Bourdon, and the Malteſe; as alſo by Rubens and Vandyck, the Velvet Brueghel, Holbein, Brouwer, Berchem, Schalken, Teniers, &c.) lately brought from beyond Sea, will be Sold by Auction on Friday the 18th Inſtant, at the three Chairs, the corner Houſe of the Little Piazza, Covent Garden, where Catalogues may be had, and the Pictures view'd to Day, and Thurſday before the Sale; the Houſe being taken up on Wedneſday for an Annual Meeting.

This Day is publiſh'd,

An ESSAY on CRITICISM. Printed for W. Lewis in Ruſſel-ſtreet, Covent-Garden; and Sold by W. Taylor, at the Ship in Pater-Noſter-Row; T. Oſborne, in Grays-Inn near the Walks; J. Graves, in St. James's-ſtreet; and J. Mayhew, near Stationers-Hall. Price 1s.

This Day is Publiſh'd,

The third and fourth, being the two laſt Volumes of Biſhop Beveridge's Theſaurus Theologicus, or a compleat Syſtem of Divinity; ſumm'd up in brief Notes upon ſelect Places of the Old and New Teſtament. Wherein the Sacred Text is reduced under proper Heads, explained and illuſtrated with the Opinions and Authorities of the Ancient Fathers, Councils, &c. Printed for Rich. Smith in Exeter-Exchange in the Strand. Where his other Works may be had. Juſt Publiſh'd, An Expoſition on the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Articles of the Church of England, by the ſame Author.

This Day is publiſhed,

Eleven Opinions about Mr. H——y, with Obſervations clearing ſome Matters. Price 1s. The Conference, or Gray's Ghoſt, Price 6d. Expoſtulatoria, or the Complaints of the Church of England, &c. By the late Biſhop King, Price 1s. All Sold by J. Baker in Pater-Noſter Row.

The Famous Water-Theatre of the late Ingenious Mr. Winſtanly, is Open'd, and will continue to be Shown for ſome time this Summer: There is the greateſt Curioſities in Water-Works, the like was never performed before by any. It is Shown for the Benefit of his Widow every Evening at Five of the Clock. With ſeveral new Additions made this Spring. Boxes 2s. 6d. Pit 1s. 6d. firſt Gallery 1s. Upper Gallery 6d. It is at the lower end of Piccadilly, and is known by the Windmill on the top of it.

To be Sold, at a lower Rate than ordinary, at the Queen's Head, joining to the Church Gate in Bedford Street, Covent-Garden, all Sorts of Druggets, Hair and Worſted Camlets, Sagathies, Duroys, Shagreens, Shalloons, Durants, Padua Serges, Shags, Serges de Nifmes, Calamancoes, and all other Goods fit for Mens Apparel. The Perſon who now keeps the Shop deſigning to leave off the Trade, and the Houſe and Shop to be Let at Michaelmas next.

Concerning the Small-Pox.

R. Stoughton, Apothecary, at the Unicorn in Southwark, having about Chriſtmas laſt Publiſhed in the Poſtman, Tyler and Courant, a long Advertiſement of his large Experience and great Succeſs in curing the Small-Pox, even of the worſt Kind and Circumſtance, having had a Reputation for it almoſt 30 Years, and can ſay that not 3 in 20 miſcarry under his Hands, doth now contract it; and only repeats, that he thinks he has attain'd to as great a Certainty therein (and the Meaſles which are next of Kin) as has been acquir'd in curing any one Diſeaſe, (an Intermitting Fever with the Bark only excepted) which he conceives may at this time, when the Small Pox ſo prevails, and is ſo mortal, juſtify his Publication, being preſſed by ſeveral ſo to do, and hopes it may be for the Good of many: He has had many Patients ſince his laſt Publication, and but One of all dy'd. He hath alſo Certificates from above 20 in a ſmall time Cured, and of the worſt ſort. What is here offered is Truth and Matter of Fact; and he will, if deſired, go with any one to the Perſons themſelves who have been Cured, many of whom are People of Value and Figure: Tis by a correct Management, more than a great deal of Phyſick, by which alſo the Face and Eyes are much ſecured; tho' one Secret he has, (obtained only by Experience, and which few or none know beſides) that when they ſuddenly ſtrike in very rarely fails of raiſing them again in few Hours, when many other things, and proper too, have not anſwered. He does not deſire nor aim at the ſupplanting any Phyſician or Apothecary concerned, but gives his aſſiſting Advice if deſired, and in ſuch a way not Diſhonourable or Injurious to other.

LONDON: Printed for *Sam. Buckley*, at the *Dolphin* in *Little-Britain*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in; as alſo by *Charles Lillie*, Perfumer, at the Corner of *Beauford-Buildings* in the *Strand*.

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